DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 296 188 CG 020 878

AUTHOR Wauchope, Barbara A.; Straus, Murray A.
TITLE Age, Gender, and Class Differences in Physical Punishment and Physical Abuse of American Children.
INSTITUTION New Hampshire Univ., Durham. Family Research Lab.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Mental Health (DHHS), Rockville, MD.
PUB DATE Jul 87
GRANT R01MH40027
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Conference on Family Violence Research (3rd, Durham, NH, July 6-9, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age Differences; Blue Collar Occupations; *Child Abuse; *Corporal Punishment; Discipline; *Parent Child Relationship; *Sex Differences; *Violence; White Collar Occupations

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship of the age and gender of the child, and the occupational status and gender of the parent, to the incidence and frequency of physical punishment and two levels of physical abuse of children, as measured by the minor, severe, and very severe violence indexes of the Conflict Tactics Scales. The subjects were children from a nationally representative sample of 3,229 families. Physical punishment was found to peak at ages 3 and 4, being used by 90% of the parents, and to decrease steadily after age 4. More than one-half of all parents were reported to still use physical punishment with their children who were 13 years of age. No age trend was found for very severe violence. Parents who used any level of violence tended to do so repeatedly. Boys were the victims more often than were girls, and more blue-collar parents than white-collar parents engaged in both minor and severe violence. These effects were found to be stronger for severe violence. Mothers used minor violence more often than did fathers. Only one significant interaction effect was found: for very severe violence, of the abused children in this sample, repetition of the abuse tended to be greatest when the victim was a girl and the perpetrator was a white-collar father. Several explanations, particularly social norms, are used to interpret findings. (Author/NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

AGE, GENDER, AND CLASS DIFFERENCES IN PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AND PHYSICAL ABUSE OF AMERICAN CHILDREN*

Barbara A. Wauchope and Murray A. Straus
Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH 03824 (603) 862-1888

ED296188

Abstract

This paper examines the relation of the age and gender of the child, and the occupational status and gender of the parent, to the incidence and frequency of physical punishment and two levels of physical abuse of children, as measured by the "minor," "severe" and "very severe" violence indexes of the Conflict Tactics Scales. The subjects are children from a nationally representative sample of 3,229 families. Physical punishment peaked at ages 3-4, used by 90% of parents, then decreased steadily. More than half of all parents still used physical punishment at age 13. No age trend was found for very severe violence. Parents who used any level of violence tended to do so repeatedly. Boys were victims more than girls and more blue collar parents than white-collar parents engaged in both minor and severe violence. These effects were stronger for severe violence. Mothers used minor violence more often than fathers. Only one significant interaction effect was found. Several explanations, particularly social norms, are used to interpret these findings.

CG 020878

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Murray A. Straus
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

*. Paper presented at the Third National Conference on Family Violence Research, University of New Hampshire, Durham, N.H., July 6-9, 1987. The data for this study are from the National Family Violence Resurvey funded by National Institute of Mental Health grant R01MH40027. This research is part of the Family Violence Research Program of the Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire. A program description and list of publications can be obtained by writing the Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824. The Family Violence Research Program has been supported by the University of New Hampshire and by National Institute of Mental Health grant T32MH15161. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the support of these organizations and to express appreciation for their comments and suggestions to participants in the Family Violence Seminar, Peggy Kieschnick, Gerri King, Dan Lobovits, Peggy Plass and Linda Williams.

AGE, GENDER, AND CLASS DIFFERENCES IN PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AND PHYSICAL ABUSE OF AMERICAN CHILDREN

It has long been established that age, gender, and class are fundamental factors affecting almost all aspects of social behavior (Linton, 1936; Parsons, 1942). Consistent with this proposition is the research showing that the behavior of parents varies according to the age and gender of the child and the socioecomic status and gender of the parent (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Chodorow, 1978; Kohn, 1969; Kohn and Schooler, 1983). These variations in parental behavior probably reflect (at least in part) societal and social class norms for children of different ages and gender.

Since age, gender, and class are important determinants of "normal" parental behavior, it is not surprising that these three variables have been important in studies of child abuse (Gil, 1970; Garbarino and Gilliam, 1980; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Olsen and Holmes, 1986). But, as will be clear from the review of previous studies in the next section, more definitive information is needed. This paper is intended to contribute to the needed body of information by providing data on how these three factors are related to physical punishment and physical abuse of children in a large and nationally representative sample of American families.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Age of Child

A child's age determines to a large extent his/her size, strength and behavior. It seems reasonable to expect this to influence whether a parent uses physical punishment or is physically abusive. However, the direction of that influence is often ambiguous. Infants have no defense against an assault. But does this helplessness mean that infants are more likely or less likely to be victimized than an older child?

Age and Physical Punishment. Given the vast literature on "developmental trends" in respect to a wide variety of parent and child behavior, it is surprising that we could locate only two studies which systematically compared the percentage of parents who use physical punishment on children of different ages. One of these was published in 1936 (Anderson, [1972] 1936) and the other is a graph of physical punishment rates by age, presented without discussion in Straus (1983). Research on physical punishment tends to examine the consequences for the child (e.g. Baumrind, 1973; Larzelere, 1986) and takes for granted that punishment is frequent with young children and decreases as the child matures. That indeed is what Straus (1983) found. Ninety-seven per cent of 3 year olds were physically punished and the rate declined as age increased. Nevertheless, almost a third of the parents of children in the late teens (15-17) reported using physical punishment.

Little evidence is available on punishment rates of children under three. A study in England of 700 mothers of one-year-old children found that about a third indignantly rejected the idea of hitting an infant

(Newson and Newson, 1963: 102). We can therefore hypothesize that an infant is less likely to incur punishment than older children. On the other hand, the opposite view is also present. When one of us suggested to a mother that physical punishment should be avoided (in a situation where the infant picked up objects from the ground and put them in his mouth) she indignantly responded "What am I going to do -- give him a lecture on the germ theory?" Newson and Newson found that two thirds of the mothers of one-year-old children believed that punishment, including physical punishment was needed with infants, and that without exception, this included physical punishment (1963: 102, 205). In addition, when a child begins to walk, the opportunities for unacceptable behavior increase. Consequently, for one and two year old children, physical punishment could be as frequent as for three-year-olds.

Age and Physical Abuse. There is some evidence that physical abuse is also highest in early childhood.[1] Studies of officially reported cases of abuse have found that children are most at risk from three months to three years of age (Gelles, [1974] 1973). Gil (1970), for example, found that the rate was highest for infants and lowest for teenagers.[2]

Data on a nationally representative sample of children age 3-17 (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980) found a bimodal pattern: children under 5 and older teenage children were the most likely to experience violence that was serious enough to be considered child abuse. Some other studies also suggest that abuse is high among adolescents, particularly adolescent girls (Garbarino and Gilliam, 1980; Olsen and Holmes, 1986). However, the type of data used and the mode of analysis undermine confidence in that finding.[3] In addition, there are such large differences in the methods and criteria for defining "physical abuse" that it would be remarkable if the studies did agree.

Gender of Child

Gender and Physical Punishment. Studies comparing physical punishment for boys and girls show that rates are higher for boys than for girls (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Straus (1971) also found self-reported rates for boys about twice those for girls.[4] Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980) reported higher rates of punishment for boys than for girls but this was true only for children age ten and older.

Gender and Physical Abuse. A number of studies have found that boys receive more physical abuse than girls, but the difference varies from study to study. Gil (1970) found only small differences: 52.6% boys in a 1967 sample and 51.2% boys in a 1968 sample. Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980) found rates of abuse that were much higher for boys than for girls (4.5% versus 2.8%, a 61% higher rate for boys). Bryan and Freed (1982) also reported boys receiving more abuse than girls.

When age is included in analyses of gender, a more complicated picture emerges. Gil's (1970) study reported that "although boys outnumbered girls in every age group below age 12, they were outnumbered by girls among the teenaged victims of child abuse" (p. 104) by about two to one. Olsen and Holmes (1986) reported a similar pattern. Garbarino and Gilliam's analyses (1980) suggest that "midadolescence is the peak

time for abuse of girls (with the peak for boys at around 2 or 3 years of age)." (p. 116).[5]

Explanations. Some analysts have emphasized inherent biological or personality differences between boys and girls which produce differences in the extent to which boys and girls provoke parental anger (de Lissovoy, 1980). For example, Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) describe boys as more "resistive" to directions than girls (p. 342). Irrespective of whether there are biological differences between boys and girls in the extent of provocative behavior, there are culturally patterned perceptions of gender differences that can make the same behavior "normal" or only somewhat problematic if done by boys and a serious problem producing a strong negative reaction if done by girls (Maccoby, 1980). Thus, a fifteen year old boy whose sexual adventures come to light will be treated quite differently than the same behavior by a girl who behaves similarly.

These culturally patterned expectations for the child produce gender-related differences in child-rearing methods. Some methods may be considered more acceptable for a son than for a daughter. For example, the belief that a son must be "toughened up" in order to deal with the world (Henry, 1963; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Miller, 1983) may increase the chances that the parents will engage in behavior that crosses the line from physical punishment to physical abuse. Girls, on the other hand, are believed by many parents to be less aggressive, competitive and less able to take care of themselves (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Parents who believe this are more likely to feel that daughters can handle harsh punishment less easily than their sons can.

Gender of Parent

Differences in use of physical punishment and physical abuse by mothers and fathers are important in several ways. First, they can provide information about gender differences in aggression (Maccoby, 1980).

Second, this information can be helpful in planning programs of intervention in respect to child abuse. The focus of such interventions tend to be the mother because she is typically the primary caregiver. However, it may be fathers much more than mothers who engage in acts of physical abuse.

Third, the gender of the parent can be important for gender role-modeling (Kagan, 1964). If the mother uses physical punishment and/or engages in more severe violence toward the child and the father does not, the child is likely to have very different conceptions of mothering and fathering and "maleness" and "femaleness" than if there were no gender differences or the reverse pattern of role-differentiation. This experience can influence the child's use of violence toward other children and as an adult (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Gil, 1970; Straus, 1983).

Gender of Parent and Physical Punishment. Bryan and Freed's (1982) study of college students found no difference in rates of physical punishment by mothers and fathers. A much larger national sample (Straus,

1983) reported higher rates of physical punishment by mothers than by fathers.

Gender of Parent and Physical Abuse. Some of the existing research shows that mothers have a higher rate of physical abuse (American Humane Association, 1986; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). Straus, et al. found an abuse rate of 17.7% for mothers and 10.1% for fathers. The higher rates for mothers are probably a reflection of the fact that mothers tend to have primary responsibility for a child and are therefore more likely to be responsible for discipline and coping with the day to day behaviors of the child (Gecas, 1976; Pleck, 1977). This places her at risk of committing more violence. In addition, social service agencies tend to list the mother as the client, even when the father is the abusing parent (Stark, 1986).

Other studies conclude that the rate of abuse from fathers is higher. Gil (1970) found that

> Fathers and [father] substitutes were involved as perpetrators in nearly two thirds of the incidents occurring in homes that did have fathers or father substitutes, and mothers or [mother] substitutes were involved in slightly fewer than one half the incidents occurring in homes that did have a mother or mother substitute. (p. 116)

Bryan and Freed (1982) also found that fathers use more violence against their children than mothers do. One explanation for this is that men are more aggressive than women (Maccoby, 1980). Another is that men are allowed greater license to use physical violence in society (Toby, 1966; Young, Beier, Beier and Barton, 1975).

Socioeconomic Class of Parent

Physical Punishment. A number of studies have found higher rates of physical punishment by lower socioeconomic status parents (for example, Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1969; Kohn and Schooler, 1983). However, a major national survey (Stark and McEvoy, 1970) found that rates were higher for middle class parents. Moreover, Erlanger (1974) concluded from a review of the available studies that there is at best only a weak relationship between socioeconomic status and punishment.

Class of Parent and Physical Abuse. Studies using officially reported cases of child abuse (Gil, 1970; Garbarino and Gilliam, 1980; Olsen and Holmes, 1986) consistently report higher rates of violence among blue collar families than among white collar families, and the highest rates of all among the poor. However, all these studies base their rates on cases known to child welfare workers. Consequently, the higher rate of abuse among low socioeconomic status (SES) families might be due to a greater tendency for abuse to come to public attention when the family is receiving welfare aid (Hampton and Newberger, 1985). On the other hand, Straus, et al. (1980) found a similar set of SES differences in a study which avoids this problem because it used self-report interview data. In fact, the blue collar rate in the Straus, et al. study is nearly twice that of white collar families.

Explanations. The reason for the SES differences has been the subject of much speculation and some research. One theory is that blue collar families tend to be more authoritarian and to emphasize conformity (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1969; Kohn and Schooler, 1983). They also tend to be less permissive and to prefer physical punishment to reason and isolation (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1969). Less education or norms that do not encourage reading lessen a blue collar parent's access to information that might build parenting skills as alternatives to violence as means of control.

Another factor which may produce more violence in low socioecomic status (SES) families is the stress typical of the life experiences of poor families. Low SES families experience more "life stresses" such as unemployment, serious illness, marital disruption, overcrowding, etc. and have fewer means than more affluent families of coping with them (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978). Moreover, additional stress arises out of the disparity between the aspirations of low SES people to rise to the top and the limited opportunities which actually exist (Rubin, 1976). Since there is considerable evidence that, in the context of American society, stress is associated with higher rate of violence (Straus and Kaufman Kantor, 1987; Linsky and Straus, 1986), it is not surprising to find that there is more violence in low SES families, including more use of physical punishment and more physical abuse.

HYPOTHESES AND METHODS

Hypotheses

Physical Abuse. Five hypotheses concerning factors associated with the rate of child abuse will be tested, namely that the incidence of child abuse is greatest for:

(1) children under one and declines gradually from there on;

(2) boys as compared to girls;

(3) mothers as compared to fathers;

(4) blue-collar as compared to white collar families; and that

(5) these variables interact with each other; for example, the relationship between socioecomic status and child abuse might be much stronger for fathers than for mothers.

Physical Punishment. On the basis of the theory that physical punishment and "child abuse" have much in common (Straus, 1983), we hypothesize that the incidence of ordinary physical punishment is associated with these four variables in a pattern which parallels that hypothesized for child abuse.

Frequency of Violence. The above hypotheses use the proportion of parents who engaged in physical punishment and physical abuse as the dependent variable. A related question concerns how frequently these behaviors occurred. There is an important difference between an occasional or rare slap and frequent slapping or spanking, or between

punching a child once and engaging in such severe violence on numerous occasions. Consequently, we replicated the tests of five (Hypothesis 1 concerning age was not tested) of the hypotheses within the subgroup of parents who reported one or more instances of physical punishment or physical abuse, using the frequency of violence as the dependent variable.

The National Family Violence Resurvey

The data used to test these hypotheses are from the National Family Violence Resurvey conducted in 1985 (Straus and Gelles, 1986; Kaufman Kantor and Straus, 1987). That study is part of an ongoing program of research on the social factors underlying violence against children.

The analysis to be reported is a replication and extension of an earlier study (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). It uses a broader representation of families in the United States. The sample is much larger (N = 3229) permitting a year-by-year analysis of age effects. It covers children from birth through 17, whereas the previous study omitted children under three -- a group thought to be at a higher risk of abuse than older children. Finally, the 1985 study includes children in single parent families, whereas the previous study excluded this "high risk" group of children. In addition, the analysis to be reported goes beyond that done previously by differentiating between three levels of violence, and by examining the interactions among the independent variables.

Sample

The respondents in the National Family Violence Survey are a nationally representative probability sample of persons 18 or over who were interviewed by telephone in the summer of 1985. To be eligible for inclusion, the respondent had to be (1) presently married or (2) presently living as a male-female couple or (3) divorced or separated within the last two years or (4) single parent with a child under 18 and living in a household. The sample consists of two parts: a national probability sample of 4,032 households, and oversamples for blacks, Hispanics and certain U.S. states, making the total sample size 6,002. This total sample was then weighted to create a nationally-representative sample, similar to the smaller national sample. The response rate was 84%. Further information on the sample is given in Straus and Gelles (1986).[6] Since the present analysis is concerned with children, the sample for this paper consists of the 3,229 respondents with a child under 18 living at home.

Definition of Child Abuse

There appears to be no national or scientific consensus on what constitutes violence and physical "abuse." Consequently, it is necessary to make our definitions and operationalizations explicit. An example of one of the many aspects on which there are sharp disagreements is whether to define a child as abused on the basis of having been injured, or on the basis of the severity of the assault, irrespective of whether on injury occurs. This study focuses on the nature of the parental act, irrespective of whether there is an injury. Specifically, for the purposes

of this study, violence is defined as "an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention, of causing physical pain or injury" to the child (Gelles and Straus, 1979:554).

Physical punishment and physical abuse are examples of "violence" as just defined. They differ in two respects: (1) the severity of the assault; and (2) the cultural "legitimacy" of the act. Thus, a parent slapping a child is categorized as "physical punishment" because it is a relatively minor violence in the sense of a low potential for causing an injury. In addition, there are cultural norms (including statutes in some states) which give parents the right to do this. If, however, a Little League baseball coach were to slap the child, the same "minor" violence could be considered "abuse." Therefore, "physical punishment" is defined as a legally permissable violent act (or acts) carried out as part of the parental role; and "physical abuse" is defined as a violent act (or acts) by a parent which exceed the level of severity permitted by law and custom. The procedures used to operationalize these concepts are the "violence indexes" of the Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, 1979), as described below.

Measures of Physical Punishment and Physical Abuse

The Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) measures three tactics used in interpersonal conflict -- "reasoning," "verbal aggression," and "physical aggression" or violence. If there is more than one child, one of the children is selected to be the "referent child" by a random process. The respondent is then asked to think of situations in the last year in which he/she had a problem with the referent child and how the situation was handled. This paper uses only items from the physical violence scale. Since the CTS questions refer to what happened in the 12 months prior to the interview, the results can be expressed as annual incidence rates. The violence items were used to create three summary rates or indexes:

(1) The Minor Violence Index includes "Threw something," "Pushed/grabbed/shoved," and "Slapped or spanked." These are violent acts which, in our opinion, are typically categorized as physical punishment, although some argue that they can also be called abuse (Gil, 1970; Garbarino and Gilliam, 1980; Straus, 1983).

(2) The Severe Violence Index includes acts which were judged to have a relatively high risk of causing physical injury to the child. The acts in this index are "Kicked/bit/hit with fist," "Hit, tried to hit with something," "Beat up," "Burned or scalded," "Threatened with gun or knife," and "Used gun or knife." We consider the occurrence of any of these acts to indicate the presence of physical abuse, and the Severe Violence Index can therefore be considered a measure of physical child abuse.

(3) A frequent objection to using the Severe Violence Index as a measure of child abuse stems from the inclusion of "hit or tried to hit with something." Many parents, and some professionals, insist that hitting a child with a hair brush or belt is not necessarily "abuse." To meet this objection we created a third violence index, called the Very Severe Violence Index. This is identical to the Severe Violence Index

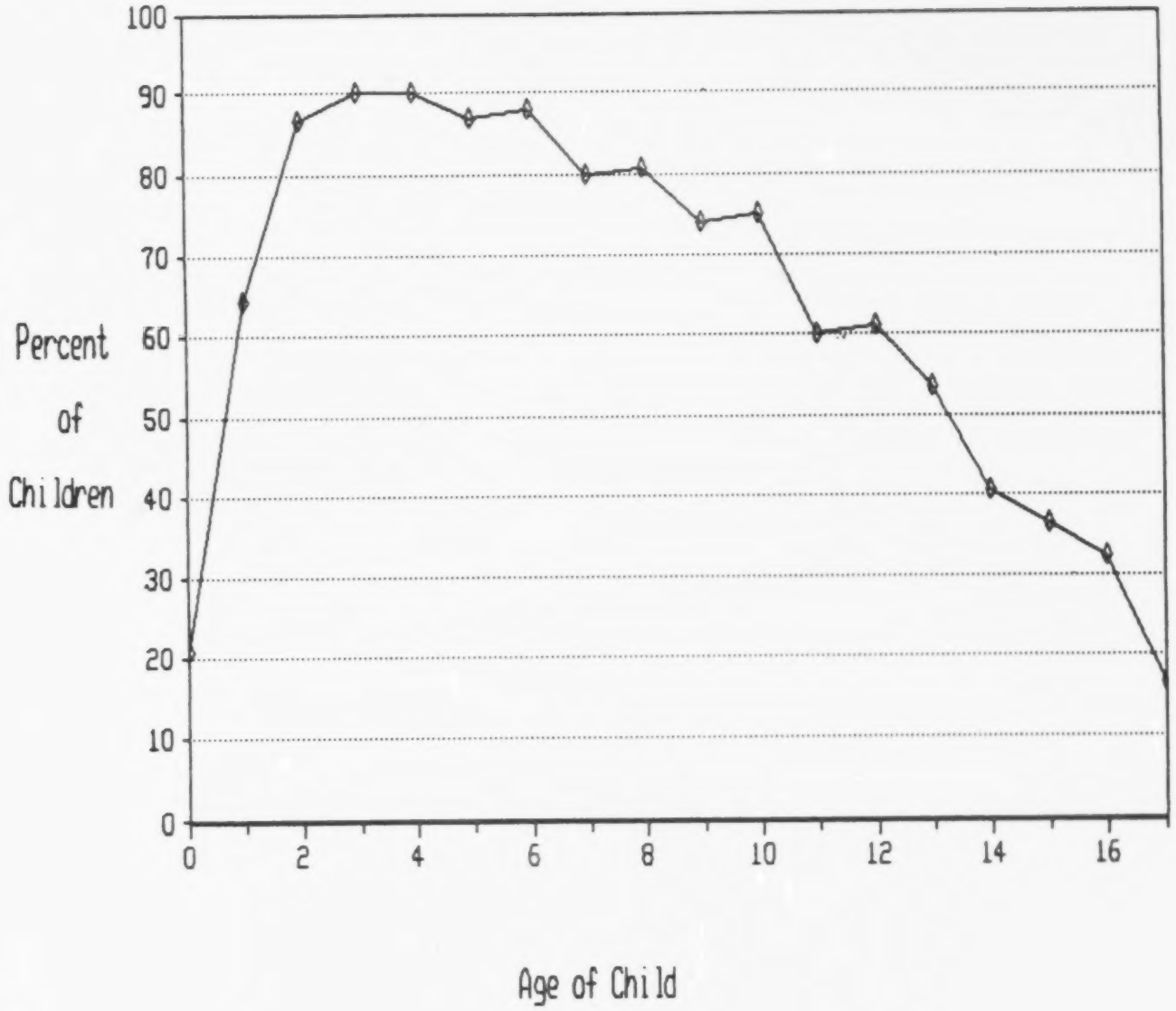

Figure 1. Incidence of Physical Punishment

except that it omits the item referring to hitting the child with an object. The remaining items seem to be almost universally regarded as indicators of "abuse," namely: "Kicked/bit/hit with fist," "Beat up," "Burned or scalded," and "Used gun or knife."

Measure of Socioeconomic Status

Each family was classified "blue collar" or "white collar" on the basis of the occupation of the parent who was interviewed, half of whom were fathers and half mothers. The classification was done on the basis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revised Occupational Classification System. Each BLS occupation code was then classified as either blue collar or white collar using the list of occupations falling into each of these two categories developed by Rice, as given in Robinson, Athanasiou, and Head (1969). The decision to use the occupation of the respondent was based on two factors. First, the growth of two income families and the trend to greater equality between husband and wife make the practice of using socioeconomic status of the husband as the main determinant of family status questionable. Second, the interview questions focused on the child rearing practices of the respondent, and it seemed best to use the occupational status of the parent whose behavior was actually measured.

AGE OF CHILD AND PARENTAL VIOLENCE

Physical Punishment

(Figure 1 about here)

Figure 1 shows the rate of Minor Violence experienced by children according to their age. It shows that this type of physical punishment begins in infancy (defined as children under one year of age) for 209 per 1,000 (i.e., 21%) of American children, and reaches a peak of 902 per 1,000 (i.e., 90%) of children ages 3 to 4. The rate then steadily declines as the child grows older, although over 50% of children are still receiving such violence as late as age 13; 32% at age 16.

These results correspond almost exactly to those found in the first national survey (Straus, 1983). However, since the first study omitted children under three, the present study, in addition to confirming the original results, shows that the rate starts somewhat lower for infants, one and two-year olds, and reaches a peak at age three.

Physical Abuse

Since physical abuse, in contrast to physical punishment, is a relatively rare phenomenon, there are not enough children to produce reliable estimates for each specific year. Figure 2 therefore groups the children into two year age intervals. Figure 2 also includes two lines because, as explained earlier, there are two measures of physical abuse--the Severe Violence Index and the Very Severe Violence Index.

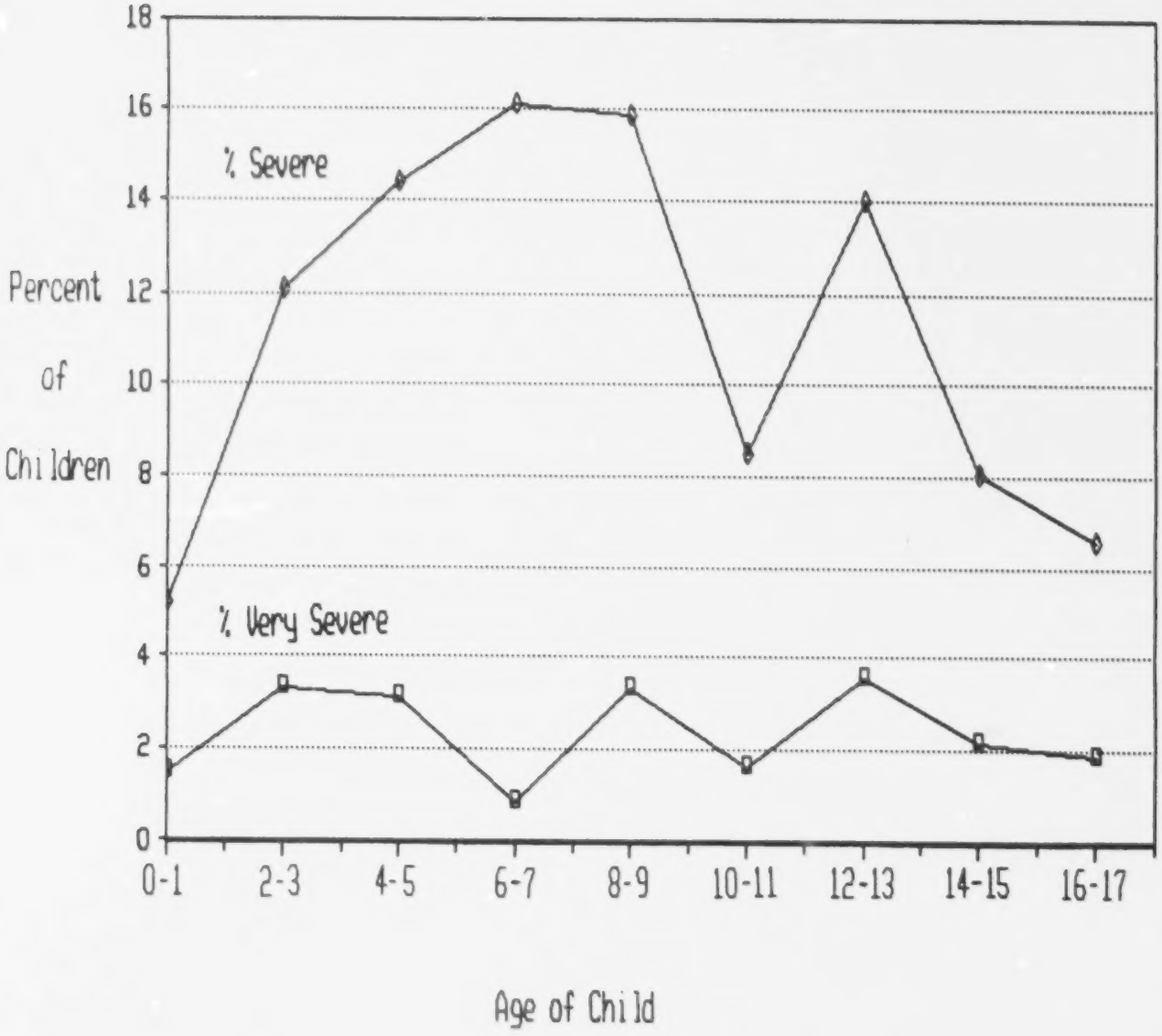

Figure 2. Incidence of Physical Abuse

Table 1. Parent-To-Child Violence: Incidence Rates Per Thousand Children -- Main Effects

Independent Variable	N[1]	Rate Per 1,000 Children		
		Minor	Severe	Very Severe
A. Gender of Child:				
Boys	1519	657	125	27
Girls	1508	595	94	18
F =		12.97**	7.90*	3.63
B. Gender of Parent:				
Fathers	1191	594	99	23
Mothers	1836	647	116	22
F =		10.40*	2.95	0.32
C. Occupational Class:				
Blue Collar	1103	635	119	34
White Collar	1925	621	104	16
F =		1.85	2.75	11.90*

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$

1. To obtain the N for a specific cell in this table, multiply the rate by the row N, e.g., the N for the upper right cell is .027 * 1519 cases = 41 cases.

(Figure 2 about here)

A glance at Figure 2 shows that the plot lines lack the relatively smooth curve found in Figure 1. For the Severe Violence Index, a bimodal pattern can be discerned. There is a steady trend upward to a peak at ages 6-7 with a rate of 161 per 1000 children per year. The rate then drops by almost half to 85 per 1000 per year for ages 10-11, then rises again to 140 per 1000 per year for 12-13 year olds before falling again. However, a 1975 study (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980: 70) and at least one other study produced similar findings. Olsen and Holmes (1986) studied a nationally representative sample of officially reported and confirmed cases of physical abuse and found a similar bimodality with peaks at ages 3-5 and 12-14.

The plot line in Figure 2 for the most abusive acts -- the Very Severe Violence -- shows still a different pattern. Specifically, the rates are not associated with age.

Taking both Figure 1 and Figure 2 into account, the age of a child is closely associated to the Minor Violence Index (i.e., ordinary physical punishment), is less closely related to the Severe Violence Index, and there is no relationship with Very Severe Violence. Thus, the more severe the violence, the less it is associated with the age of the child. This same pattern is present in varying degrees in all of the following analyses.

Gender and Age of Child

(Table 1 about here)

Gender of Child. The first two rows of Table 1 show that boys consistently receive more punishment and abuse than girls. Moreover, as the severity of the violence increases, the gender difference grows. The Minor Violence rate for boys is 10% higher than that for girls; the Severe Violence rate is 33% higher, and the Very Severe Violence rate is 50% higher than that experienced by girls.[7] The findings of the present study are consistent with those of the earlier national survey.

Interaction of Gender and Age. We also plotted the three violence indexes separately for boys and girls of each age, and found no interaction of gender and age (figures not shown). That is, contrary to the studies of Gil (1970), Garbarino and Gilliam (1980), and Olsen and Holmes (1986), at all age levels boys tended experience more violence than girls do, although there was much seemingly random fluctuation from one two year age group to another.

Perhaps the reason why the present study obtained different findings than the studies just cited is that all three of those studies used data on cases which were known to child welfare agencies, whereas our study measured abuse on the basis of interviews with parents. It is impossible to know which of these two measures more adequately reflects the experiences of children in the United States. The higher rate for boys in our study might be due to a greater willingness of parents to tell our interviewers about violence against boys, rather than a greater tendency to hit boys. On the other hand, the higher rate for girls in official

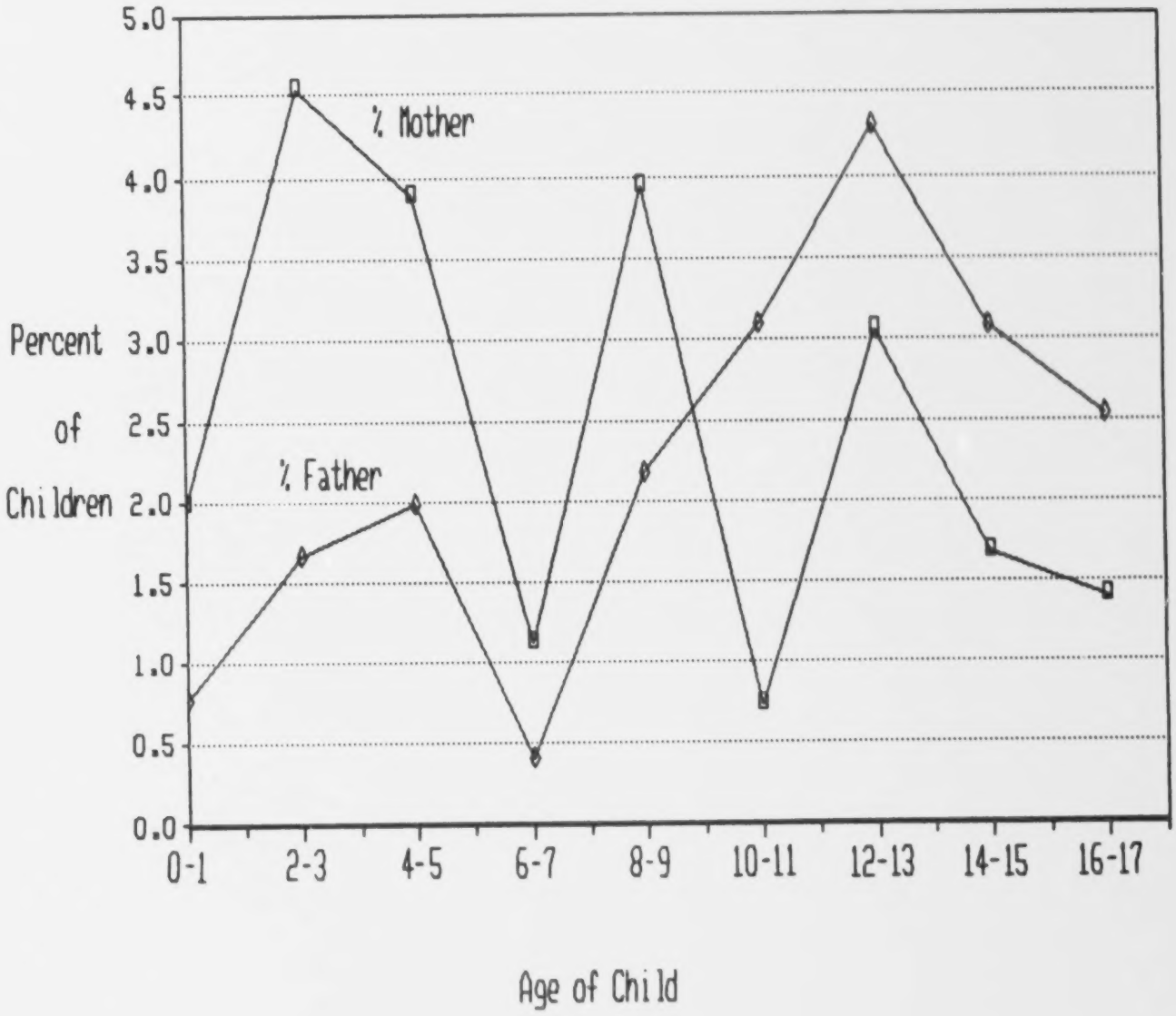

Figure 3. Incidence: Very Severe Violence

cases might be due to violence against girls being more likely to come to official attention, rather than a greater tendency to hit girls.

Gender of Parent and Age of Child

Gender of Parents. Part B of Table 1 shows that children are more at risk of physical punishment from their mothers than from their fathers (the column headed "Minor Violence"). Using the Severe Violence Index as a measure of physical abuse, Table 1 shows that this pattern was also true for physical abuse but when the Very Severe Violence Index is the criterion, children experience a slightly higher rate of violence from fathers. The differences for Severe and Very Severe Violence are not significant. Similarly, a previous study (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980:71) found more violence received by children from mothers than from fathers for all levels of violence.

Interaction of Gender of Parent and Age of Child. The age plots for the three measures of parental violence were replicated separately for mothers and fathers (figures not shown). Again, there was considerable fluctuation from one age group to another. Nothing in the plots of Minor and Severe Violence contradicts the conclusions reached earlier, namely that children have a higher risk of receiving physical punishment and abuse from their mothers. For Very Severe Violence, the risk is no higher from mothers than from fathers.

(Figure 3 about here)

However, Figure 3 shows an interaction of age with risk of Very Severe Violence from mothers and fathers. Children have a higher rate of receiving Very Severe Violence from their mothers at younger ages but from age 8 to 10, the rate is higher from fathers.

Occupational Class and Age of Child

Occupational Class. Part C of Table 1 shows that there is a slight tendency for children in blue collar families to experience more Minor Violence (first column) and more Severe Violence. However, the difference is statistically significant only for extremely severe assaults (last column of Table 1). In general, the more severe the violence, the greater the occupational class difference. In fact, the blue collar children in this study a 52% higher rate of Severe Violence than the white collar children and 140% higher rate of Very Severe Violence.

Interaction of Occupational Class and Age of Child. The age patterns shown in Figures 1 and 2 did not change when controlling for occupational class (figures not shown). That is, age was clearly related to use of Minor Violence, less clearly for the Severe Violence Index, whereas in respect to the most stringent measure of physical abuse -- the Very Severe Violence Index -- no relationship to age was found among either blue collar or white collar families.

Table 2. Parent-To-Child Violence: Incidence Rates Per Thousand Children -- Interaction Effects

Gender of Child		Fathers: Blue Collar	Fathers: White Collar	Mothers: Blue Collar	Mothers: White Collar
A. MINOR VIOLENCE					
Boys	Rate	624	617	701	673
	N	(277)	(338)	(257)	(647)
Girls	Rate	542	587	673	587
	N	(274)	(302)	(295)	(638)
Total	Rate	583*	603*	686*	630*
	N	(551)	(640)	(552)	(1285)
B. SEVERE VIOLENCE					
Boys	Rate	142	108	140	120
	N	(277)	(338)	(257)	(647)
Girls	Rate	75	73	120	100
	N	(274)	(302)	(295)	(638)
Total	Rate	109	91	129	110
	N	(551)	(640)	(552)	(1285)
C. VERY SEVERE VIOLENCE					
Boys	Rate	50	16	51	14
	N	(277)	(338)	(257)	(647)
Girls	Rate	12	14	25	18
	N	(274)	(302)	(295)	(638)
Total	Rate	31	15	37	16
	N	(551)	(640)	(552)	(1285)

*Gender of Parent by Occupational Class $F = 4.23$, $p < .05$

Summary of Incidence Patterns

Physical Punishment. The findings suggest that almost all of the 3,229 children in this sample experienced some form of Minor Violence sometime during their childhood from both fathers and mothers in both blue and white collar families. This was most likely to occur when the children were younger, particularly around age 4. After age 4, physical punishment dropped off steadily with each additional year of age. However, Severe Violence ("physical abuse") showed little or no change with the age of the child.

These findings are consistent with the first hypothesis: physical punishment decreases with increasing age of the child. However, contrary to that hypothesis, the incidence of physical punishment was found to be relatively low in infancy, increasing to age 3-4. The decrease did not start until age five.

Hypotheses 2 and 3, that posit more punishment of boys than girls and from mothers more than from fathers, were both supported. However, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. No statistically significant difference was found between blue collar and white collar families.

The relationship between age and Minor Violence did not change when the interaction of age with gender of child, gender of parent and occupational class was examined (Hypothesis 5).

Physical Abuse. The same five hypotheses were tested using physical abuse (as measured by the "Severe Violence" and "Very Severe Violence" indexes) as the dependent variable. The age trend in physical punishment did not hold for the more serious violence. Contrary to Hypothesis 1, abuse was not related to age.

Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4 were both supported by the results of this study. More boys were abused than girls; more children from blue collar families were abused than from white collar families. However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported: children were not more at risk of abuse from mothers than fathers.

With the exception of an interaction between age and gender of parents for Very Severe Violence, interaction effects between age and the other variables were not found (Hypothesis 5).

INTERACTION OF GENDER AND CLASS

The fifth hypothesis posited strong interaction effects among the age, gender, and class variables. Interactions with age are described above. Table 2 was computed to determine if the joint effects of gender of child, gender of parent, and occupational class of the family reveals unique characteristics for one or more of the eight combinations of these variables.

(Table 2 about here)

Consistency of Main Effects

Only one statistically significant interaction was found for Table 2 (for gender of parent and occupational class). Thus, the main effects discussed previously tend to apply, irrespective of the controls for the other variables; Hypothesis 5 tends not to be supported.

The most consistent findings are for gender of the child: all 12 comparisons of boys and girls in Table 2 show that boys are assaulted more than girls, irrespective of whether the parent is the mother or the father, or blue collar or white collar. Occupational class is almost as consistent -- 10 out of the 12 possible comparisons show a higher rate for blue collar children.

The significant interaction of gender of parent with occupational class for Minor Violence is difficult to interpret. There seems to be a tendency for boys in blue collar families to be by their fathers more than expected, and for girls in blue collar families to be hit by their fathers less than expected on the basis of the main effect. The opposite occurs from blue collar mothers -- i.e., there is a tendency for girls to be hit more and boys less than expected on the basis of the main effects. This may be an example of the traditional attitude which makes it unacceptable for a man to hit a woman, and therefore of the often noted tendency of blue collar families to follow more traditionally gender differentiated patterns of behavior (Komarovsky, 1964; Rubin, 1976; Young, Beier, Beier and Barton, 1975). One pattern may include the tendency of fathers to take greater interest in the socialization of their sons and mothers to do the same with daughters (Gecas, 1976).

Parallels Between Physical Punishment and Physical Abuse

The final hypothesis tested was that the incidence of ordinary physical punishment is associated with age, gender of child, gender of parent and occupational class of parent in a pattern which parallels that hypothesized for child abuse. A comparison of the above findings for punishment and abuse shows that this hypothesis tends not to be supported. The relation to physical abuse is different than the relationship of these variables to physical punishment. One pattern is similar: boys receive more punishment and also more abuse than girls.

GENDER AND CLASS DIFFERENCES IN FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE

The incidence rates used up to this point do not take into account how often the child was assaulted. The rates were computed by counting a child as having been physically punished or abused if any of the acts in the index occurred one or more times during the year. The annual incidence rates tell us what proportion of children were assaulted, but they do not distinguish between a child who was assaulted once versus a child who was repeatedly assaulted. Tables 3 and 4 were computed to provide that information. They present data on gender and class differences in how often these acts of violence occur. The procedure was to separate out those children who had been assaulted, and compute the mean number of times for that sub-group. Thus, Tables 3 and 4 omit children who were not assaulted during the year of this study.

Table 3. Parent-To-Child Violence: Frequency (Mean Number) of Incidents Per Year -- Main Effects

Independent Variable		Minor	Severe	Very Severe
A. Gender of Child:				
Boys	Mean	9.9	5.3	3.9
	N	(997)	(186)	(40)
Girls	Mean	9.0	6.8	4.8
	N	(898)	(137)	(25)
B. Gender of Parent:				
Fathers	Mean	10.1*	6.0	3.7
	N	(707)	(116)	(26)
Mothers	Mean	9.1*	5.9	4.7
	N	(1188)	(207)	(39)
*Gender of Parent F = 4.05, p < .05				
C. Occupational Class of Respondent:				
Blue Collar	Mean	9.2	5.9	3.5
	N	(700)	(129)	(37)
White Collar	Mean	9.6	6.0	5.3
	N	(1195)	(194)	(28)

Table 4. Parent-To-Child Violence: Frequency (Mean Number) of Incidents Per Year -- Interaction Effects

Gender of Child		Fathers: Blue Collar	Fathers: White Collar	Mothers: Blue Collar	Mothers: White Collar
		A. MINOR VIOLENCE			
Boys	Mean	11.5	10.4	8.3	9.7
	N	(173)	(209)	(180)	(435)
Girls	Mean	8.8	9.4	8.5	9.3
	N	(148)	(177)	(198)	(374)
Total	Mean	10.2	9.9	8.4	9.5
	N	(321)	(386)	(378)	(809)
		B. SEVERE VIOLENCE			
Boys	Mean	5.5	6.2	5.1	4.8
	N	(39)	(36)	(36)	(74)
Girls	Mean	3.8	8.4	8.0	6.4
	N	(19)	(22)	(35)	(61)
Total	Mean	5.0	7.0	6.6	5.5
	N	(58)	(58)	(71)	(136)
		C. VERY SEVERE VIOLENCE *			
Boys	Mean	2.7	1.9	4.3	7.0
	N	(14)	(5)	(13)	(7)
Girls	Mean	1.0	10.6	4.5	3.7
	N	(3)	(4)	(7)	(11)
Total	Mean	2.4	5.8	4.3	5.1
	N	(17)	(10)	(21)	(18)

*Gender of Child by Gender of Parent by Occ. Class $F = 4.60$, $p < .05$

(Tables 3 and 4 about here)

Main Effects

Studies on reported cases of abuse (Herrenkohl, et al., 1979) have found that when children are assaulted, the attacks are typically not isolated incidents. Table 3 reveals similar findings. If a child is hit once, he/she tends to be hit again and hit frequently. Reading down the Minor Violence column of Table 3 shows that on the average, children who were physically punished at all, tended to have this happen about ten times during the year. This figure applies to both boys and girls, irrespective of whether the parent doing the punishing was the father of the mother, or whether it happened in a blue collar or white collar family.

The second and third columns of Table 3 show that assaults in the Severe Violence category occurred half as often as Minor Violence, and assaults in the Very Severe Violence category a third as often as Minor Violence. However, the same conclusion can be drawn: on the average, abused children are repeatedly assaulted -- an average of about six times per year if the Severe Violence Index is used as the measure of child abuse, and an average of about four times a year if the Very Severe Violence Index is used.

Gender of Child. Part A of Table 3 show that boys experience a slightly higher frequency of minor violence than girls (an average of 9.9 incidents, versus 9.0 for girls). This reverses for the two severe violence measures, where the mean number of assaults is higher for girls. Although none of the three comparisons is statistically significant, some comments are in order because of the seeming inconsistency with the child abuse rates presented earlier, which showed a higher rate for boys. The two sets of figures are not inconsistent. The child abuse rates show that more boys are assaulted, whereas the child abuse frequencies in Table 3 show that of those children who are assaulted, the average number of abusive incidents tends to be higher for girls than for boys.

Gender of Parent. Part B of Table 3 shows that children tend to receive Minor Violence more often from fathers than from mothers. There is almost no difference between fathers and mothers in the frequency with which assaults in the Severe Violence category are carried out. However, for the Very Severe Violence when the mother is the perpetrator, the number of assaults is higher than when the father is the perpetrator, although this difference is not significant.

Occupational class. Part C of Table 3 presents some potentially important class differences, even though they are not statistically significant. There is little difference in respect to Minor Violence and almost no difference for Severe Violence. However, when Very Severe Violence is used in a white collar family, it tends to be used much more frequently. Again, this does not contradict the opposite differences in rates reported previously (Table 1.). The rates show that parent-to-child violence occurs in a larger proportion of blue collar families, whereas the means in Table 3 show that, in the families where such

violence does occur, the assaults occur more often if the parent is in the white collar occupational category.

Interaction Effects

Table 4 was computed to determine if gender and class interact to produce differences in the mean number of violent incidents. The tests of Hypotheses 2 through 5 for frequency of physical punishment and abuse revealed one main effect. Of those children who were physically punished, the punishment occurred more frequently when the parent administering the punishment was the father. Only one significant interaction effect was found: gender of child by gender of parent by occupational class for Very Severe Violence.

The interaction for Very Severe Violence in part C of Table 4 shows that, of the abused children in this sample, repetition of the abuse tends to be greatest when the victim is a girl and the perpetrator is a white collar father. These girls were severely assaulted an average of 10.6 times during the year of this survey. On the other hand, abused daughters of blue collar fathers, experienced an average of only one such assault. The same pattern of highest average number of assaults for daughters of white collar fathers and lowest average number of assaults for daughters of blue collar fathers is also shown in Part B of Table 4.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Physical punishment and physical abuse experienced by a nationally representative sample of 3,229 American children from birth through age 17 was studied to determine differences according to the age of the child, the gender of the child and the parent, and the occupational class of the parent. A "Minor Violence Index " (pushing, slapping, shoving, throwing things) was used as the measure of physical punishment. Physical abuse was measured at two levels: The first measure is a "Severe Violence Index" which includes punching, biting, hitting with an object, beating up, burning, and attacks with a knife or gun. Since many people do not consider hitting a child with certain types of objects (such as a belt or hair brush) to be "abuse," a "Very Severe Violence Index." which omits the "hit with object" item was also computed.

Physical Punishment

The results for physical punishment show that it begins in infancy for 21 percent of American children, and rises to 90 percent of children by age 3 and 4. The rate declines year by year thereafter, but even at age 13, about half of all American children were physically punished in the year of this study (1985). More boys than girls experienced physical punishment from more blue collar parents than white collar parents, and from more mothers than fathers. However, the differences were small. The age trend (a peak at 3-4 and a steady decrease thereafter) was found, irrespective of gender of the parent or child and irrespective of occupational class.

Physical Abuse

The age trend found for physical punishment was also discernable for physical abuse as measured by the Severe Violence Index. However, the pattern was much less clear. Moreover, when physical abuse was measured by the Very Severe Violence index, no consistent age related pattern was found.

Another important difference between physical punishment and physical abuse is that gender of the child and occupational class are strongly associated with abuse, in contrast to the small differences found for ordinary physical punishment. The Very Severe Violence rate is 50% higher for boys than for girls, and 125% higher for blue collar than for white collar parents.

Number of Assaults

A limitation of the annual incidence rates is that they do not indicate how often an abused child was abused. We therefore computed the average number of assaults for children who experienced each type of violence. Children who were physically punished underwent this experience an average of about ten times during the year, i.e. just under once a month. But many such incidents tend to not be reported (mostly because they are unremarkable events which have been forgotten) and the true average is probably well over once a month. For the first of the two measures of physical abuse, the mean is about six times a year, and for the most severe physical abuse about four times a year. Thus, if physical force is used, it is seldom an isolated event. If it happens once, it tends to happen repeatedly.

Gender of child and occupational class differences in the average number of assaults per child follow a different pattern than was found using the incidence rate, especially for "physical abuse." Although the abuse rate is lower for girls than for boys, when a girl is abused, the average number of abuse incidents per year is higher than for boys. Similarly, although fewer white collar children experience abusive acts, when they are the victims of such violence, the average number of abusive acts is higher than for blue collar children.

Normative Theories of Child Abuse

Violence against children, like other social interaction, is strongly influenced by cultural norms, both explicit and implicit. This is clearest for what we have termed "minor violence." Slaps and shoves, when used by parents, are labeled as "physical punishment," but the same acts would be labeled as "criminal assaults" if they occurred between adults. The legal norms of our society give parents the right to use minor violence in controlling and training children. In addition, there are informal norms which impose on parents the expectation or obligation to use physical punishment when "necessary." The existence of this normative expectation is rarely perceived until it is called into question by a parent who fails to conform (see Garfinkel, 1964 for examples of this process). Carson (1986) found that non-spanking parents tend to be the objects of social control efforts by the friends and relatives in the form of polite but pointedly expressed doubts about "what is going to happen"

to the child. Carson found that these parents, like other "deviants", tend to develop socially acceptable "accounts" to justify the deviance to themselves and others.

Age Norms. The extremely smooth age gradient for physical punishment, and the fact that essentially the same curve was found irrespective of gender of the parent or the child and occupational class, probably reflects the wide acceptance of the norms giving parents the right, and "when necessary" the obligation, to use physical punishment, including the specification of the ages at which physical punishment is most appropriate. On the other hand, hitting a child with an object, although permitted by law, is an act which many consider to be "wrong" i.e., not normatively approved. Consistent with the ambiguous normative status of hitting with an object, there is considerable irregularity in the age curve. Kicking or biting (and the other acts in the Very Severe Violence Index) are clearly not part of the normative prescription for physical punishment at any age, and therefore show no clear differences by age because there are no age norms to influence the rate.

Gender and Class Norms. The higher rate of physical abuse in blue collar families is consistent with certain other studies which show that the parents in such families tend to believe in the efficacy of "strong discipline" more than white collar parents. Similarly, the higher rate of abuse for boys is consistent with the belief that a certain amount of "toughening" is good for boys.

Norm Violation and Normlessness. Cultural norms may also help explain one of the more puzzling findings of the study -- the reversal of the differences in the gender and class differences found for child abuse rates. When the measure is not whether child abuse occurs, but how often it occurs in a given family, the highest frequencies are found for girls and for white collar families rather than for boys and blue collar families. Previous studies (Newson and Newson, 1963; Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1969; Kohn and Schooler, 1983; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980) find greater approval of physical punishment among blue collar families, and also more approval of "stronger discipline" (Ausubel, 1958; McKinley, 1964). If this is the case, white collar parents who use "abusive" violence are acting contrary to the norms which tend to characterize their stratum of society. Such parents may be in a double situation of normlessness. First, they have deviated from the norms prohibiting these acts. Second, they do not have available the guide lines which are probably present in sectors of society which permit such acts but which protect children by specifying limits on how often such tactics may be used. Alternatively (or in addition) the high number of assaults carried out by middle class abusing parents may occur because, once the normative barrier to using violence is broken other social controls may tend to be ignored. Judgement falls to the parent to interpret what is the appropriate amount of violence to use and apparently for some, this amount is high. In short, once having broken the main rule, subsidiary rules or controls also tend to be ignored or ineffective.

Other Theories

Although these normative differences are plausible explanations for the high average number of assaults experienced by children, particularly

girls, of white collar families, other explanations need to be considered, for example, threshold effects and personality effects.

Threshold Effects. The threshold at which parents use abusive violence may differ by class and gender. Let us assume that middle class parents demand less conformity (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Devereux, Bronfenbrenner, and Rogers, 1969; Kohn, 1969; Kohn and Schooler, 1983). To the extent that this hypothesis is correct, it takes more severe and more persistent misbehaviors by the child to provoke middle class parents into using abusive violence. Thus, at low levels of misbehavior there are fewer attempts by middle class parents to control the child by physical punishment than there are by blue collar parents. However, when the child's infractions of the rules escalate, knowing he/she can "get away with" more without risking punishment, the parents' awareness that the child's behavior is out of control leaves them feeling out of control. They may become angry and lash out at the child.

This is the model suggested by Baumrind's (1973) study of permissive and authoritarian parents. She found that permissive parents scored higher in both frequency of anger and inability to control the child. Parke and Collmer (1975) have suggested that this discrepancy between the parents' attitude of disapproval of physical punishment and their use of violent behavior anyway "may be creating the potential for abuse" (p. 538).

An Integrated Theory of Child Abuse

We believe that each of the two theories mentioned above, plus a number of other factors, probably play a role in explaining child abuse. An adequate understanding of child abuse therefore requires formulating and testing a theory which integrates these diverse elements. That, however, is beyond the intent of this paper. Our purpose was more limited -- to test certain hypotheses about age, gender, and class differences in physical punishment and physical abuse. Results of these tests were mixed. A particularly important finding is that Very Severe Violence against children (the variable which corresponds most closely to clinical cases of "physical abuse") is not related to the age of the child.

Our interpretations of the findings emphasized cultural norms concerning violence against children. We suggested that norms which permit or require physical punishment of children explain the near universality of this practice in early childhood. The prevalence of this type of normatively approved violence against children has important implications for understanding and preventing physical "abuse," i.e., violence which exceeds the culturally permissive level. Although most physical punishment does not turn into the type of severe violence which is labeled as "abuse," most abuse starts out as ordinary physical punishment (Kadushin and Martin, 1981). Moreover, being the subject of physical punishment trains future parents in use of violence. Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980) and Straus (1983) found that the more physical punishment a parent experienced as a child, the higher the proportion who engaged in severe violence toward their own children. Moore and Straus (1987) found that parents who approved of slapping a child who talked back to them had a much higher rate of severe violence than other parents. These and other studies suggest that the nearly universal use of physical

punishment documented in this paper is an important part of the explanation for the high rate of physical abuse. As David Gill put it in the introduction to one of the pioneer studies of child abuse:

> ... incidents of serious physical attack on children [are]
> ... deeply rooted in culturally supported attitudes.
> Consequently, it is possible that a society that unambiguously rejected the use of physical force against children would have a lower rate of ... destructive behavior toward children than would a society that does not reject such use of physical force (1970, pp. 12-13).

FOOTNOTES

1. See the Methods section for a conceptual and operational definition of physical punishment and physical abuse. For purposes of this introduction and the review of the literature, physical "abuse" means violence against a child which, in the judgment of the person classifying the behavior, goes beyond legally permissible physical punishment.

2. The officially reported rate of abuse may be higher for infants and toddlers than for older children because even minor acts of violence (such as shaking) may cause serious injury to an infant; and more serious assaults that would only cause pain or a bruise to a twelve-year-old, could seriously injure a two year. Even when no medical treatment is needed, a punch in the stomach is probably more likely to be reported if the victim is a toddler rather than a teenager. Since officially reported cases of child abuse are highly influenced by whether an injury occurred, and by perceptions of how permissible the assault is relative to the age of the child, studies based on officially reported cases will give a different picture of the relative numbers of infants and toddlers who are abused than studies which are based on whether an serious assault (such as a punch or kick) occurred. Finally, adolescent abuse may go unreported because abuse of older children is "often hidden within such other problems as parent-child conflict, running away, and delinquency" (Olsen and Holmes, 1986:16).

3. These studies give the percent of cases (from among those known to human service professionals) at each of several age levels who are physically abused, sexually abuse, neglected, etc. These percentages could indicate to the unwary reader that the rate is higher for adolescents than for infants and toddler, when the reverse might be the case. Suppose 30% of maltreated children age 0-2 experienced physical abuse versus 50% of maltreated 15-17 year old children. That does not necessarily mean a higher incidence rate of physical abuse for teenagers. In fact, the reverse could be the case. Suppose there are 10,000 cases of maltreated children age 0-2 and 5,000 cases of maltreated children aged 15-17. Thirty percent of 10,000 is 3,000 cases, whereas 50% of 5,000 cases is 2,500. If there are about the same number of 0-2 year olds and 15-17 year olds in the population, then the rate of physical abuse is higher for 0-2 year olds than for 15-17 year olds.

4. Because of gender-related attitudes about punishment and abuse, it is possible that rates for boys will be higher than for girls in self-reported data. Parents may be more willing to reveal that they use

violence against sons than they are about similar violence against their daughters.

5. See Footnote 2.

6. For convenience and economy of wording, terms such as "marital," and "spouse," and "wife," and "husband" are used to refer to the respondents, regardless of whether they are a married or a non-married cohabiting couple. For an analysis of differences and similarities between married and cohabiting couples in respect to violence and other characteristics, see Yllo (1978) and Yllo and Straus (1981).

7. While there are increasing percentage differences between boys and girls with increasing violence, the significance of these rates declines. However, this is likely to be due to the decreasing number of cases available as violence increases rather than decreasing probability of a relationship between gender and punishment.

REFERENCES

American Humane Association. (1986). Highlights of official child neglect and abuse reporting 1984. Denver, CO: Author.

Anderson, J. E. (1972). The young child in the home. New York: Arno. (Original work published 1936).

Ausubel, D. P. (1958). Theory and problems in child development. New York: Grune and Stratton.

Baumrind, D. (1973). The development of instrumental competence through socialization. In A. D. Pick (Ed.), Minnesota symposia on child psychology (Vol. 7, pp. 3-46). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1958). Socialization and social class through time and space. In D. G. Gil (Ed.), Child abuse and violence (pp. 441-483). 1979 New York: AMS Press.

Bryan, J. W. & F. W. Freed. (1982). Corporal punishment: Normative data and Sociological and Psychological Correlates in a Community College population. Journal of Youth and Adolescence 11, 77-87.

Carson, B. A. (1986). Parents who don't spank: Deviation in the legitimation of physical force. Doctoral dissertation, University of New Hampshire.

Chodorow, N. (1978). The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender. Berkeley: University of California Press.

de Lissovoy, V. (1980). The behavioral and ecological syndrome of the high-risk child. In R. Volpe, M. Breton, & J. Mitton (Eds.), The maltreatment of the school-aged child (pp. 11-17). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Devereux, E. C., U. Bronfenbrenner, & R. R. Rogers. (1969). Child-rearing in England and the United States: A cross-cultural comparison. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 31, 257-270.

Erlanger, H. S. (1974). Social class differences in parents' use of physical punishment. In S. K. Steinmetz & M. A. Straus (Eds.), Violence in the family (pp. 150-158). New York: Harper and Row.

Garbarino, J. & G. Gilliam. (1980). Understanding abusive families. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Garfinkel, H. (1964). Studies of the routine grounds of everyday activities. Social Problems, 11, 225-250.

Gecas, V. (1976). The socialization and child care roles. In F. I. Nye (Ed.), Role structure and analysis of the family (pp. 33-59). Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage.

Gelles, R. J. (1973). Child Abuse as Psychopathology: A Sociological Critique and Reformulation. In S. K. Steinmetz & M. A. Straus (Eds.), Violence in the family (pp.190-204) 1974. New York: Harper and Row.

Gelles, R. J. & M. A. Straus. (1979). Determinants of violence in the family: Toward a theoretical integration. In W. R. Burr, R. Hill, F. I. Nye & I. L. Reiss (Eds.), Contemporary theories about the family (pp. 549-581) . New York: Free Press.

Gil, D. G. (1970). Violence against children: Physical child abuse in the United States. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hampton, R. L. & E. H. Newberger. (1985). Child abuse incidence and reporting by hospitals: The significance of severity, class and race. American Journal of Public Health, 75, 56-69.

Henry, J. (1963). Making Pete tough. In S. K. Steinmetz & M. A. Straus (Eds.) (1974), Violence in the family (pp. 238-240). New York: Harper and Row.

Herrenkohl, R. C., E. C. Herrenkohl, B. Egolf & M. Seech. (1979). The repetition of child abuse: How frequently does it occur? In C. H. Kempe, A. W. Franklin & C. Cooper (Eds.), The abused child in the family and in the community: Selected papers from the second international congress on child abuse and neglect, London, 1978. 1980 (Vol. 1). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Kadushin, A. & J. A. Martin. (1981). Child abuse: An interactional event. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kagan, J. (1964). Acquisition and significance of sex typing and sex role identity. In M. L. Hoffman & L. W. Hoffman (Eds.), Review of child development research (Vol. 1, pp. 137-167). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kaufman Kantor, G. & M. A. Straus. (1987). The drunken bum theory of wife beating. Social Problems, 34, 213-230.

Kohn, M. L. (1969). Class and conformity: A study in values. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.

Kohn, M. L. & C. Schooler. (1983). Work and personality: An inquiry into the impact of social stratification. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Komarovsky, M. (1964). Blue collar marriage. New York: Random House.

Larzelere, R. E. (1986). Moderate Spanking: Model or Deterrent of Children's Aggression in the Family? Journal of Family Violence, 1, 27-36.

Linsky, A. & M. A. Straus. (1986). Social stress in the United States: Clues to regional patterns of crime and illness. Dover, MA: Auburn House.

Linton, R. (1936). The study of man: An introduction. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Maccoby, E. E. (1980). Social development: Psychological growth and the parent-child relationship. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Maccoby, E. E. & C. N. Jacklin. (1974). The psychology of sex differences. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

McKinley, D. G. (1964). Social class and family life. London: Collier-Macmillan Limited.

Miller, A. (1983). For your own good: Hidden cruelty in child-rearing and the roots of violence. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Moore, D. & M. A. Straus. (1987). Violence of parents toward their children, New Hampshire, 1987. Report submitted to the New Hampshire Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, P.O. Box 607, Concord, NH 03301.

Newson, J. & Newson, E. (1963). Patterns of Infant Care in an Urban Community. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Olsen, L. J. & W. M. Holmes. (1986). Youth at risk: Adolescents and maltreatment. Children and Youth Services Review, 8, 13-35.

Parke, R. D. & C. W. Collmer. (1975). Child abuse: An interdisciplinary analysis.
In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), Review of child development research (Vol. 5, pp. 509-590). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Parsons, T. (1942). Age and sex in the social structure of the United States. American Sociological Review, 7, 604-616.

Pearlin, L. I. & C. Schooler. (1978). The structure of coping. In H. I. McCubbin, A. E. Cauble & J. M. Patterson (Eds.) (1982), Family stress, coping, and social support (pp. 109-135). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Pleck, J. H. (1977). The work-family role system. Social Problems, 24, 417-427.

Robinson, J. P., R. Athanasiou, & K. B. Head. (1969). Measures of occupational attitudes and occupational characteristics. University of Michigan: Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research.

Rubin, L. B. (1976). Worlds of pain: Life in the working-class family. New York: Basic Books.

Stark, E. (1986). Service encounters of victims and perpetrators: A conceptual overview. Paper presented at the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.

Stark, R. & J. McEvoy III. (1970). Middle class violence. Psychology Today, 4, 52-65.

Straus, M. A. (1971). Some social antecedents of physical punishment: A linkage theory interpretation. In S. K. Steinmetz & M. A. Straus (Eds.), Violence in the family. 1974. New York: Harper and Row.

Straus, M. A. (1979). Family patterns and child abuse in a nationally representative American sample. Child Abuse and Neglect, 3, 213-225.

Straus, M. A. (1983). Ordinary violence, child abuse, and wife-beating: What do they have in common? In D. Finkelhor, R. J. Gelles, G. T. Hotaling, & M. A. Straus (Eds.), The dark side of families: Current family violence research (pp. 213-234). Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage.

Straus, M. A. & R. J. Gelles. (1986). Societal change and change in family violence from 1975 to 1985 as revealed by two national surveys. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48, 465-479.

Straus, M. A., R. J. Gelles, & S. K. Steinmetz. (1980). Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family. Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Straus, M. A. & G. Kaufman Kantor. (1987). Stress and child abuse. In R. E. Helfer and C. H. Kempe (Eds.), The battered child, (4th Ed.). University of Chicago Press. (Revised version of chapter in the 1980 edition.)

Toby, J. (1966). Violence and the masculine ideal: Some qualitative data. In S. K. Steinmetz and M. A. Straus (Eds.) (1974), Violence in the family (pp. 58-65). NY: Harper and Row.

Yllo, K. (1978). Nonmarital cohabitation: Beyond the college campus. Alternative Lifestyles, 1, 37-54.

Yllo, K. & M. A. Straus. (1981). Interpersonal violence among married and cohabiting couples. Family Relations, 30, 339-347.

Young, D. M., E. G. Beier, P. Beier & C. Barton. (1975). Is chivalry dead? Journal of Communication, 28, 57-64.